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ABSTRACT

This guide was developed to help secondary education teachers plan a summer cooperative vocational education program. This booklet's content is presented in four sections. The first one covers background information while section two explains the reasons for establishing a summer cooperative education program. The third section discusses ten steps in setting up the program. The last section examines the outcomes in relation to the four program objectives and concludes with five recommendations. (EM)

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PLANNING GUIDE FOR A SECONDARY SUMMER COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

FROM AN
EXEMPLARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROJECT ENTITLED

"THE SUMMER COMPONENT IN A YEAR-ROUND, RURAL, SECONDARY COOPERATIVE EDUCATION MODEL"

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PLANNING GUIDE FOR A SECONDARY SUMMER COOPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Lyons High School is located in Lyons, Nebraska a small, rural community of approximately 1200 population. The high school itself has an enrollment of approximately 140 students in grades 9-12. Senior classes typically number 35-40 students. There are several other small communities in the immediate vicinity of Lyons. The nearest communities of sizeable populations include: Fremont--35 miles (23,000);Sioux City Iowa--40 Miles (90,000);Omaha--65miles (500,000).

Lyons High School has offered a cooperative vocational education program since the school year 1972-73. The structure of this cooperative vocational education program has been multiple occupational--across traditional vocational education program lines (in Nebraska this type of cooperative vocational education program is termed "diversified occupations" programs (D.O.). Mason and Haines referred to these as "combination programs"[1] Enrollment in the coop program has been limited to seniors. In most school years 40-50 percent of the senior class was enrolled in the D.O. program during the regular school year.

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[1] Mason and Haines, (1972).

In some school years as many as 60-70 percent of the senior class had made application for admittance to the D.O. program but were unable to be served because of a limited number of training stations within the Lyons Community.

Lyons High School offers the following cocurricular and extra-curricular activities:

Table 1

"Lyons High School Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities"

Average number of students participating (Total Population 140)	Activity
70	Dramatics (11-12 grades, two productions per year. A total of 12 weeks of rehearsals.)
80	Instrumental Music (Small groups, large groups, individual)
35	Vocal Music (Small groups, large groups, individual)
40	Future Farmers of America
25	Future Homemakers of America--HERO
20	Future Business Leaders of America
	Varsity, Junior Varsity and Freshman Teams in the following sports:
40	Football--Boys
25	Volleyball--Girls
15	Wrestling--Boys
25	Basketball--Boys
20	Basketball--Girls
10	Track--Boys
20	Track--Girls
10	Honor Society
20	Student Council
40	Letter persons Club (Athletic "L" Club)
10	German Club

WHY SUMMER COOP?

After operating the D.O. program for three school years, Lyons High School personnel identified two basic problems which were limiting student participation in the cooperative education program:

1. A lack of businesses within the community willing and able to serve as quality training stations.
2. A lack of time on the part of some students to become involved in the cooperative program.

In considering solutions to these two problems, the possibility of operating the cooperative education program during the summer months seemed like the best alternative. When looking at the two factors contributing to limited student participation--"time" and "a lack of businesses in the community"--it was apparent the school had only limited control over one of the problems (time) and virtually no control over the other. Solutions to the "time" problem seemed two-fold: 1) decrease student involvement in the various curricular, extracurricular, and cocurricular activities to allow more time for cooperative employment experiences or 2) offer the cooperative education program at a time when these activities will not conflict. Student and parent attitudes concerning involvement in the activities of a school and community are difficult to change even though vocational educators may have no difficulty weighing the benefits of the various programs.

Therefore, rather than attempt to either limit student participation in the various school and community activities or to attempt to change student and parent attitudes toward participation in these various activities, it was decided to offer the cooperative education program at a time when there would be virtually no conflict with these activities--during the summer. In further considering operating the cooperative education program during the summer it also became apparent that a means of solving another one of the two basic problems identified would be possible. Since the training stations available in the Lyons community were limited, consideration could now be given to going outside the Lyons community to expand the training opportunities available to the students. Thus, the plan to bus some students to another community for cooperative training experiences was developed.

In summary it was the hypothesis of Lyons High School personnel that by expanding our traditional cooperative vocational education program to include a "summer component" two basic problems commonly faced in cooperative program operation could be alleviated.

SETTING UP THE SUMMER COOP PROGRAM

A very basic assumption in setting up the Summer Cooperative Vocational Education program was that "the 13 elements identified by the Nebraska State Department of Education, Vocational Division, as necessary for successful cooperative program operation are equally valid and necessary for a summer cooperative education program." Therefore, in establishing the summer cooperative program specific attention was given to implementing the following 13 elements into the program:

Table 2

"13 Elements of Any Cooperative Vocational Education Program"

1. Qualified teacher--coordinator
2. Related class
3. Supervised on-the-job training
4. A selected training station
5. Coordination duties carried out by the teacher-coordinator
6. Adequate coordination time for the teacher-coordinator
7. Written training agreements
8. Written training plans
9. Written evaluations of the student-learners by employers
10. Preparatory curriculum
11. Extended contract time for the teacher-coordinator
12. Advisory committee
13. Adequate facilities and equipment

The overall plan of developing and implementing the summer cooperative education program centered sequentially around the following 10 steps.

Table 3

"Steps in Setting Up a Summer Cooperative Vocational Education Program"

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:	March	April	May	June	July	August
Step 1--Determine the community	XXX					
Step 2--Identify employers		XXXXXXXXXXXX				
Step 3--Identify students		XXXXXXXXXXXX				
Step 4--Determine occupational interest and career objective of student		XXXXXXXXXX				
Step 5--Match student interest with possible employers			XXX			
Step 6--Employer interviews and make student selection			XXXXXXX			
Step 7--Negotiate training agreements			XXXXXXX			
Step 8--Negotiate training plans			XXXXXXX			
Step 9--Students engage in on-the-job training and related class instruction				XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Step 10-Teacher-coordinator peform coordination function	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX					

STEP 1--DETERMINING THE COMMUNITY

Lyons is geographically located in northeast Nebraska and is surrounded by several other small communities. Table 4 shows the geographic location of Lyons in relation to larger communities considered as possible sites in which to implement the summer cooperative education program. Table 5 further depicts the geographic and population information of these communities.

Table 4

"Geographic Information of Lyons"

Communities of sizeable populations include:

Table 5

"Potential Training Centers for Student-Learners"

Community	Approximate Population	Approximate Mileage From Lyons
Fremont, NE	23,000	35
Sioux City, IA	90,000	40
Norfolk, NE	16,000	52
Omaha, NE (Metropolitan)	500,000	65

Because of the population size of Sioux City, Iowa and corresponding employment opportunities in a community of that size compared to other communities nearby, the decision was made to utilize Sioux City as the population center to which students would be transported for summer cooperative vocational education program.

STEP 2--IDENTIFY POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

The identification of potential employers was perhaps the most important step in the process of setting up the summer coop program. The project director and both teacher-coordinators made trips to Sioux City during April and May to begin to identify training stations. These contacts were made without the benefit of any prior contact such as a survey to determine interest of the business in the coop program. As a result many business were contacted with a relatively small number willing to serve as training sponsors. AN ADDITIONAL STEP THAT WILL BE ADDED IN FUTURE YEARS IS THAT OF A MAIL SURVEY TO ESTABLISH TRAINING STATION LEADS FOR THE TEACHER-COORDINATOR.

The Project Staff found it to be an interesting challenge to locate training stations in Sioux City, Iowa. Most businesses were not familiar

with Lyons, Nebraska so the Lyons Staff were "outsiders" to the Sioux City community. Futhermore, some businesses had worked with the Sioux City Public Schools in the past in cooperative vocational education programs. Some of those businesses elected not to participate with Lyons High School in the cooperative education program since they were already participating with the Sioux City Schools. Likewise, many businesses which at some time had students in cooperative vocational education programs of the Sioux City Schools, had preconceived ideas concerning cooperative vocational education.

STEP 3--IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL STUDENT-LEARNERS

The task of identifying potential student-learners was not a difficult one. Most Lyons High School students were aware of the D.O. program offered during the regular school year and it was merely a matter of informing them of the additional option of the summer program. Two meetings were held with students in grades 10-11 during the school day to inform them of the summer program. One evening meeting was held with parents interested in the program. Written descriptions of the program appeared in the local community newspaper and in the school district's monthly newsletter. In addition, the teacher-coordinators and project director met individually and in small groups with students to answer questions.

The final result was that 19 students in grades 10-11 with stated career objectives were identified as potential enrollees in the summer cooperative vocational education program.

STEP 4--DETERMINE OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST

Each of the 19 students who had expressed an interest in particpating

in the summer coop program and who had likewise secured parental permission, were screened to determine their career objective and occupational interest. The results were as follows:

Table 6

"Occupational Interest of Potential Student-Learners"

Student	Career Objective
1	Building Construction
2	Ag. Production
3	Accounting
4	Cook
5	Secretary
6	Ag. Mechanics
7	Secretary
8	Clerical Aide
9	Clerical Aide
10	Child Care
11	Ceramics
12	Receptionist
13	Accountant
14	Nurse
15	Dairy Farming
16	Wildlife Management
17	Computer Operator
18	Wildlife Management
19	Accounting

STEP 5--MATCH STUDENT INTEREST WITH POSSIBLE EMPLOYERS

With the Project Staff having made preliminary contacts with employers and having identified those businesses willing and sutiable to serve as training stations, interviews between student and employers were scheduled. The school provided the transportation from Lyons to Sioux City for students to participate in the employment interview. This step is also a very critical step in the process of establishing a quality cooperative education program. Unless employers are provided with employees interested in the occupational area in which they are placed the purpose becomes work experience rather than cooperative training. Likewise, other students in the school develop attitudes

concerning the meaningfulness of the job placements of students enrolled in the cooperative program.

STEP 6--EMPLOYERS INTERVIEW AND MAKE FINAL SELECTION

If more than one student were interested in the same occupational area, both students were sent for the interview with the employer. The employer made the final selection of the student-learner he wished to employ.

STEP 7--NEGOTIATE TRAINING AGREEMENTS

When the employer had made the decision as to which student-learner would be employed, a written training agreement was negotiated with that employer. As is the usual practice, the training agreement was signed by all concerned parties--employer, teacher-coordinator, parent, and student.

STEP 8--NEGOTIATE TRAINING PLANS

At the time the training agreement was negotiated with the employer a training plan was likewise developed. The training plan outlined the skills to be developed on the job and those to be developed in the related class.

STEP 9--STUDENTS ENGAGE IN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AND RELATED CLASS INSTRUCTION

Once the student-learner had been placed in the training station and the training agreement and training plan had been finalized, the student-learner then engaged in on-the-job training combined with related classroom instruction. The on-the-job training was on a daily basis between May 24-August 13 (12 weeks.) The school provided the daily transportation for the student-learners from Lyons to Sioux City

(approximately 40 miles one way.) Some of the time during the summer program the teacher-coordinator served as the driver for the students. At other times a separate driver was employed to transport the student-learners to and from their training stations. The related class for the cooperative vocational education program met for three hours one night each week. Because of the travel time each day (approximately two hours) and the varying work schedules for on-the-job training experiences, it was impossible to schedule the related class during the day.

An interesting and valuable spin-off of the daily travel time occurred during the days the teacher-coordinator also served as the driver transporting students to and from their training stations. With approximately two hours spent "on the road" with the students on those days many problems the student-learners were encountering on the job were brought out and discussed at that time. An additional feature of this teacher-student and student-student interaction was that it was quite immediate to the time a problem had arisen. The teacher-coordinators and students felt this was an advantage over the related class situation of cooperative education programs operated during the normal school year in which students may wait several hours or even days for feedback on problems faced while on the job.

STEP 10--TEACHER-COORDINATORS PERFORM COORDINATION FUNCTION

The teacher-coordinators role in coordination activities in a community 40 miles from "home" is not an easy task. The teacher-coordinator begins as an "outsider" to the community and must sell himself and the program. However once student-learner placements were finalized the regular coordination duties were carried out with

little difficulty. Employer visitation, student-learner evaluations, and monitoring the implementation of the training agreement and training plan were among the basic coordination duties carried out. Two teacher-coordinators were utilized in the summer program. One served as teacher-coordinator during the first six weeks of the program and the other served as teacher-coordinator during the last six weeks of the program. This allowed for time for professional growth activities and for some vacation time for each of the teacher-coordinators. Because of the nature of the program (D.O./multiple occupational) it also made it possible to take advantage of two different professional preparations in the teacher-coordinators, i.e. business and office education and agricultural education.

OUTCOMES

The number of student-learners which were placed in the summer cooperative vocational education program was not as great as the project staff had anticipated. Seven out of 19 students identified as potential enrollees in the program were able to be placed in training stations. Five of the seven were placed in Sioux City and two were placed in the Lyons Community for their cooperative training.

In terms of the objectives of the summer cooperative program, three of the four objectives were clearly accomplished and the fourth objective was partially accomplished.

The four objectives which were clearly accomplished include:

Table 7

"Outcomes"

OBJECTIVE (Objectives Attained)	ACCOMPLISHMENT CRITERIA
1. To place 40 percent of the student learners enrolled in the summer program in occupational areas not readily available as training stations in the Lyons community.	1. At least three of the student learner placements (41%) were in such occupational areas. A community survey and past placement records of the D.O. program operated during the regular school year have shown these to be areas in which there is a lack of training stations in the Lyons community: 1. Agricultural Mechanics 2. Secretarial (2)
2. To increase by 30 percent the number of days without conflicting curricular, cocurricular and extracurricular activities during the year in which cooperative training experiences are available to students.	2. There are normally 180 school days in the regular school year during which cooperative vocational education experiences are available to students. The operation of this summer program increased that number by 60 days (12 weeks between May 24-August 13) or 33 1/3 % during which time there were no conflicting curricular, cocurricular or extracurricular activities.
3. 90 percent of the students participating in the program will develop an entry level marketable skill by spending a minimum of 200 hours on the job without termination.	3. 100% of the students enrolled in the program met this criteria.
(Objectives Partially attained)	
4. To increase the number of 10th and 11th grade students participating in a cooperative program by 7 and 10 students respectively.	4. There were no 10th grade students which participated in the summer program and only seven 11th grade students.

vocational education program, employer contacts and successes as training sponsors begin to "snowball" as time goes on. All five Sioux City employers which were utilized during this first year of operation have agreed to take another student-learner next year.

Specific Recommendations

1. For schools seeking training stations in a community other than the one in which their school is located, some type of employer survey be conducted to provide leads to potential training sponsors.

2. In small programs where less than 11 students (one van or small vehicle load) are transported to a different community for placement, consideration be given to allowing the teacher-coordinator to serve as the driver occasionally in order to take advantage of the interaction possibilities the project staff and students found meaningful.

3. Sufficient coordination time be allowed the teacher-coordinator(s) during the spring of the school year to make employer contacts in preparation for the summer program.

4. The project staff felt that the summer cooperative education program has positive implications for all secondary schools regardless of size or geographic location. Of the two basic premises upon which the program was based, one could be beneficial to students in any-sized school:

   A. Providing cooperative vocational training experiences at a time when commitments to curricular, cocurricular, or extracurricular activities are minimized or eliminated.

5. The rural school can likewise realize the benefit described in No. 4 in addition to:

   A. Providing a wider range of occupational training areas by utilizing a larger community in which to place some students for their cooperative training experiences.

The year-round school has been piloted by some school systems. In the area of cooperative vocational education it seems to be a very viable concept.

Bibliography

Mason, Ralph E. and Peter G. Haines. Cooperative Occupational Education, 2nd ed. (Danville, 1972) p. 4.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

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